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SPORTS

Winchester girls tennis loses to Wellesley in state semifinals, but still among top four in Division 1

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

June 14, 2025 . 6:00 AM — 3 min read

The members of the Winchester High School girls tennis team. COURTESY PHOTO

The Winchester High School girls tennis team (18-4, eighth seed) advanced to the Division 1 state semifinal round after knocking off Boston

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4), the top seed, in a close Elite 8 matchup, 3-2 at the Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center in Dorchester on June 6.

After this win, the Red & Black were victorious in three straight postseason matches.

But that streak came to an end on Thursday afternoon (June 12) in the state semifinals against Wellesley (23-0, fourth seed) in Lexington. The Raiders were able to defeat the Winchester girls, 4-1. The Bay State Conference school was then scheduled to meet up with Lexington (22-0, sixth seed) in the state championship match at MIT on June 14.

Head Coach Greg Lowder was certainly quite pleased with the upset win over Boston Latin.

"It was a really dramatic win," Lowder said. "Boston Latin was the top seed for a reason, and is an incredibly strong team, but everybody rose to the occasion to beat them. Our singles players battled as hard as they could, while our doubles teams did the same.

"It was a particularly (pressure-packed) situation for Mia Lock and Esha Bhalla, because they played the last 90 or so minutes knowing that the entire match was on their shoulders," added Lowder. "But they handled the situation admirably, and that was independent of the (winning) result."

Daryana Skobeleva defeated Halina Nguyen in first singles, 6-2, 7-6 (7-5). Andrea Bilic, however, lost her second singles match to Vanessa Vu, 2-6, 0-6. Sophie Kim then dropped a competitive third singles match to Lillian Nguyen, 6-3, 2-6, 2-6.

The second doubles team of Avery Machemer and Cate Sheehan then evened the match after beating Maya Nguyen and Iris Tian in str
6-1, 6-4.

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With the match now hanging in the balance, all Winchester eyes were on Lock and Bhalla, and they didn't disappoint. They were able to persevere through a hard-fought 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 three-set marathon over Boston Latin's Gisele Ngo and Harkin Lee to send their teammates off to the Division 1 state semifinals.

Heading into the Final Four against Wellesley, Lowder said, "we're expecting a battle" against the defending state champs.

"We are just hoping to make it as difficult as possible for them to win each and every point," the Winchester coach added. "We know they're a great team, and so we're excited for the chance to play them."

But at the end of Thursday's match, Lowder didn't really change his opinion of the Raiders.

"They have great players at the top of the lineup, and awesome doubles," he said.

Lock and Bhalla recorded the only Winchester win in first doubles, beating Mia Chung and Sari Hart, 3-6, 7-5, 7-5.

Skobeleva lost a hard-fought three setter against Bella Gopen in first singles, 6-4, 2-6, 3-6. Bilic was shutout by Kimmy Tal in second singles, 0-6, 0-6. Kim fell to Sarah Mackey in third singles, 1-6, 2-6. Machemer and Sheehan dropped a three-setter to Kate Snow and Nicole Tavis in second doubles, 4-6, 7-6, 2-6.

This was the last high school match for Kim and Machemer, and five of their teammates.

"Sophie and Avery were our captains this year, along with (their [illegible] Edie Burke," said Lowder. "Regina Perez, Hanlin Zhang, Michaela Jens and

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Alessandra Manganaro are our graduating seniors on the roster. They are all just incredible role models that I've ever had. They are talented players, but more importantly they are the best people. They are all so kind and caring. I don't ask them to do anything; they just naturally do it. Our whole team will miss them tremendously."

Winchester doesn't really set any goals, according to the coach.

"We are very much focused on creating the best team dynamic we can," he added. "We want the tightest bond. Making it to the Final Four was great, but had we lost in the Elite 8, then so be it. It's all good."

The Winchester girls were awarded for their fine season with five starters making the Middlesex All-League team. There's Skobeleva, Lock, Bhalla, Machemer and Sheehan all among the elite in the Middlesex League.

"Daryana had the best season of any (player) we've ever had," said Lowder. "She constantly found ways to push herself to new heights. Mia and Esha complemented each other so well, but I think their ability to pick each other up was so crucial to their success. Cate and Avery are two of my favorite people. They're cousins, who are able to keep matches relatively stress-free, because of that foundation."

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SPORTS

Winchester boys basketball heads to Bridgewater-Raynham for Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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March 3, 2026

SPORTS

Winchester wrestling enjoys Top 10 finish at state divisional meet; senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover High School, Mother Nature gave them a break to rest and recuperate with Monday's blizzard that resulted in two days off from school. There

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Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

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With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoo… English, Sarpong, Bu… Middlesex League elite

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The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

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February 27, 2026

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

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